Libertarianism a Different Linguistic Expression for Communism

Introduction

At first glance, libertarianism and communism appear as ideological opposites: one champions individual liberty and free markets, the other collective equality and state control. Yet, beneath their divergent rhetoric lies a striking convergence—an envisioned endgame of a stateless, classless society. Libertarianism, despite its anti-collectivist veneer, pursues the same utopian horizon as communism, albeit through a different path. Where communism employs the state as a battering ram to dismantle class before dissolving into stateless harmony, libertarianism seeks to dismantle the state first, presuming class distinctions will erode in its absence. This shared telos is obscured by linguistic sleight-of-hand, a reaction to cultural disdain for communism, particularly in the American psyche. However, both ideologies falter against the immovable reality of human nature, rendering their promises physically unattainable. Through an examination of their premises, methods, and contradictions, libertarianism emerges as communism by another means—a parallel dream dressed in individualist garb, yet equally doomed by its denial of humanity's hierarchical instincts.

The Shared Vision: Stateless and Classless

Communism's endgame is well-documented. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels envisioned a trajectory where the proletariat seizes the state, eradicates class distinctions under a "dictatorship of the proletariat," and ultimately witnesses the state "wither away" once its purpose is fulfilled. This stateless, classless society—often termed "full communism"—is the ideological North Star, a world free of exploitation and hierarchy. Historical attempts, from the Soviet Union to Maoist China, have stalled at the authoritarian phase, casting doubt on the feasibility of this dissolution. Yet, the theoretical endpoint remains clear: no state, no classes.

Libertarianism, particularly in its anarcho-capitalist or minarchist strains, mirrors this stateless aspiration. Figures like Murray Rothbard and David Friedman advocate for a society of voluntary association, where the state's coercive monopoly is abolished, and individuals interact through free markets and mutual consent. The path differs—libertarianism rejects the state outright rather than wielding it as a tool—but the destination overlaps: a world without centralized power. Less explicit is the classless component, yet it lurks beneath the surface. By removing the state, libertarians argue, artificial hierarchies propped up by cronyism, subsidies, and legal privilege collapse. In their place emerges a fluid order where status reflects individual merit, not systemic rigging. Such a vision, while not overtly labeled "classless," aligns with communism's aim to dismantle fixed social strata, suggesting a deeper kinship between the two.

The Blank Slate and the Classless Individual

Central to libertarianism's implicit classlessness is its elevation of the individual over the collective. The individual, stripped of group identity, is inherently classless—a blank slate undefined by race,

caste, or economic inheritance. This echoes John Locke's tabula rasa, a cornerstone of libertarian thought, more so than Immanuel Kant's deontological ethics (though Kant's influence on rights-based arguments is notable). Locke's premise—that humans are shaped by experience, not predestined roles—underpins the libertarian rejection of deterministic hierarchies. In a stateless society, your position isn't dictated by birthright or state-enforced privilege but by your actions. This individualism dismantles class as a structural force, aligning with the communist dream of a society unburdened by rigid social categories.

Libertarian doctrine reinforces this by its silence on race and innate differences. Unlike modern Marxism, which integrates race into its class framework, libertarianism—rooted in the non-aggression principle (NAP) and property rights—treats such categories as irrelevant. The rational actor, equal in moral worth, is the unit of analysis; group traits like race or inherited ability find no footing in the theory's premises. Critics might point to outliers—paleolibertarians like Hans-Hermann Hoppe who flirt with cultural or racial distinctions—but the core doctrine, from Robert Nozick to Ludwig von Mises, remains race-agnostic. This blank-slate assumption implies a level starting field, where class distinctions, if they emerge, are incidental, not systemic. By sidelining collectivist markers, libertarianism constructs a logic that ends in a classless horizon, even if it avoids the term.

Communism's Evolution vs. Libertarianism's Purity

Modern Marxism complicates this comparison. Where classical Marxism fixated on economic class—workers versus capitalists—contemporary iterations, influenced by critical theory and intersectionality, expand the concept. Race, gender, and other identities become proxies for class oppression, preserving the collectivist lens. A racial group, for instance, is cast as an oppressed "class" pitted against a dominant one, perpetuating the us-versus-them dynamic Marx envisioned. This evolution keeps communism tethered to group identity, amplifying its hierarchical focus even as it aims for equality.

Libertarianism, by contrast, doubles down on individualism, rejecting collectivization outright. The call to "become individuals" rather than rally for collective wants and needs—whether economic or racial—dissolves class identity at its root. If class only exists through group constructs, and libertarianism denies those constructs legitimacy, then its stateless society is, by definition, classless in spirit. This marks a stark divergence in method—communism builds toward classlessness through collective struggle, libertarianism through individual liberation—but not in outcome. Both envision a world where fixed hierarchies vanish, whether by smashing them with state power or starving them without it.

Linguistic Camouflage and Cultural Context

Why, then, is this convergence obscured? Language plays a pivotal role. Communism's explicit classless rhetoric—tainted by decades of authoritarian failures and Cold War propaganda—carries a stigma, especially in America. Terms like "classless society" evoke images of gulags and bread lines, alienating a public steeped in individualism and market worship. Libertarianism, emerging in this

cultural milieu, cloaks its parallel vision in safer terms: "liberty," "voluntary association," "free markets." Ayn Rand's Objectivism, with its scorn for collectivism, exemplifies this shift, framing the stateless ideal as a triumph of the self, not a dissolution of class. This linguistic pivot—possibly a deliberate appeasement of American sensibilities—hides the overlap with communism's endgame.

Yet, the overlap persists. Rothbard's For a New Liberty sketches a stateless order that, while not branded classless, implies a radical leveling of state-backed privilege. Without government to enforce monopolies or redistribute wealth, social strata become fluid, echoing communism's promise of a hierarchy-free world. The difference lies in intent—communism targets class abolition as its mission, libertarianism as a byproduct—but the destination aligns. Libertarianism's reticence to embrace "classless" as a goal reflects not a rejection of the concept, but a strategic rebranding to dodge communism's cultural baggage.

The Fatal Flaw: Human Nature

If libertarianism is communism by another means, both stumble on the same rock: human nature. The persistence of "haves and have-nots"—even in a stateless, individualist framework—undercuts their utopian claims. Communism assumes humans can be molded into altruistic equals, shedding self-interest under the right conditions. Historical evidence—elite privileges in "classless" regimes—suggests otherwise. Libertarianism, more attuned to self-interest, assumes a stateless market will sort people fairly, yet wealth gaps and power imbalances emerge nonetheless. Silicon Valley without regulations isn't classless; it's billionaires and gig workers, a new aristocracy minus the titles.

Both ideologies are "Talmudic nonsense"—overwrought, theoretical edifices that collapse under human reality. The Talmudic allusion evokes endless scholastic debate, detached from practicality. Communism's "withering state" remains a fantasy; libertarianism's "voluntary society" breeds hierarchy despite its premises. Humans—driven by competition, tribalism, and ambition—resist the classless ideal. Stratification isn't just a state artifact; it's a natural outcome of talent, effort, and luck. Communism fights this with force, libertarianism with denial, but neither wins. Their shared endgame—stateless, classless—presumes a species capable of transcending its instincts, a physical impossibility.

Conclusion

Libertarianism and communism, for all their surface enmity, converge on a utopian horizon: a society without state or class. Communism wields the state to erase class, then dissolves it; libertarianism erases the state, letting class wither in its wake. The former's collectivism contrasts with the latter's individualism, yet both hinge on a blank-slate logic—whether explicit in Marxism's remade man or implicit in libertarianism's race-agnostic actor—that promises a classless dawn. Modern Marxism's racial turn only widens the methodological gap, not the teleological one. Linguistic camouflage obscures this kinship, a nod to cultural pressures, but the parallels endure. Ultimately, both are unworkable, clashing with human nature's stubborn hierarchies. Libertarianism may be communism by another means, but neither can manifest its dream. The stateless, classless society remains a mirage—noble in theory, absurd in flesh.